



INTRODUCTION TO MEETS AND MEET INFORMATION

Swimming competitions provide opportunities for Athletes to compete with other club Athletes and to achieve times so that they can monitor their own development and progression as well as to win medals and have fun.

Most swimming clubs offer a range of competitive opportunities to suit their Athletes and will encourage them to try a range of different events during the course of their time in the club.

This guide is not an exhaustive list because each club will have its own specific information but gives an indication as to what to expect.

INTERNAL CLUB COMPETITIONS

Internal club competitions provide the first race experience for most Athletes, often taking place in their home pool, providing a familiar and relaxed environment. These can take various forms:

Club Time Trials

- Organised with coaches, parent helpers or Athletes timing each other while they practise their skills.

Fun Galas

- Beginning to understand competing using these fun events.
- These do not have to be just swimming strokes.
- Fun Galas are normally managed in teams and can involve floats, noodles, balls, working in pairs and made up strokes.

Mini Galas

- Mini Galas are a fantastic opportunity for new and younger Athletes to gain competition experience over short distances.

Club Championships

- Club Championships generally cater for all the age groups and abilities in the club, with competition over a range of events.



LICENSED MEETS

All swimming competitions that involve Athletes belonging to more than one club are licensed.

This is to ensure that the calendar does not become too congested, that meets are offered at sensible times of the year for swimmer development, and to support Athletes being exposed to quality experiences that are appropriate to their age and stage of development.

The level of licence that has been granted should be on the meet information.

Level 4:

These meets are closed meets and have a maximum of 4 teams including the host team competing.

Rules for strokes are not the priority for these meets more used as a teaching aid for Athletes but the focus should be on fun and team spirit.

This license sees a maximum of 2 hours swimming.

Level 3:

Meets run under a level 3 licence are aimed at younger Athletes, Athletes who have chosen to be less competitive and those in the early stages of their swimming careers.

The rules of swimming are not rigorously applied because these meets are more about gaining experience and having fun racing than achieving times.

They are limited to one-day maximum.

Mini Meets, Minnows Meets & Novice Meets

- These meets are aimed at younger and inexperienced Athletes, usually aged 12 years old and under.
- These are great fun and can get very noisy as team spirit and support is very much encouraged.
- Races are over short distances – most commonly one length (25m) or two lengths (50m) often with relays.



Graded Meets, Time Banded Meets & Development Meets

- These meets are aimed at Athletes who are still learning and developing.
- Entry is restricted to Athletes who are slower than a particular time, or within a range of times, or to Athletes who have not swum a particular event before.
- It is particularly important to check the meet information for these types of meets.

Level 2:

Level 2 meets are swum under full swimming rules and regulations and may take place over a whole day or a weekend.

These are a bit more serious, and the times achieved by Athletes can be used for entry into District and National Championships and to qualify for the District Regional Programme.

Times swum at level 2 meets are known as accredited times.

Age Group Meet

- Age group meets are competitions where the races and events are divided up into age groupings.
- Where there are medals, these will be awarded to the winners of a particular age group (e.g. 10-12 years).
- These meets tend not to have any entry time restrictions and can vary as to what swimming distances and age groups are involved.
- In some meets the Athletes are grouped according to a swimmer's age on the day of the competition and others age is at 31 December.

Open Meet

- An Open meet has no age groups and the winner is the fastest swimmer regardless of their age.

District Meets

- District Meets are usually open to all of the clubs in a District and some may welcome clubs from outside the District too.
- Districts organise meets to support Athletes and to help them achieve times for entry into National Events and District Championships throughout the swimming year.
- These are run as level 2 meets.



Level 1:

These are the highest standard of meets available in Scotland. A high standard of facility and officiating is expected and Athletes will have to achieve fast entry times in order to compete.

Level 1 meets can offer up to 9 hours of swimming each day so expect up to three sessions per day.

District Championships

- For these meets, Athletes will usually have to be quite fast because one of the main purposes of the meet is to determine the champion of the District.
- Athletes must have achieved the times stated in the meet information to be considered for entry.
- Swimmer entry times for these meets, may need to have been achieved at an accredited meet.
- Many District Championships offer events for para-Athletes.

Club Long Course Meets

- There are a few club long course meets that are of a particularly high standard and may be of importance to the whole nation.
- These meets can apply for level 1 licences which gives them the chance to offer finals in the evening.
- They must have a high standard of entry time and entries are restricted to Athletes aged 11 and over.

SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

These are for all Athletes who achieve the qualifying standard within Scotland.

Competition is fierce and the strongest Athletes in Scotland compete to become the champions alongside visitors from England and other nations who want to compete in Scottish events.

Some Scottish National Championships offer events for para-Athletes.



Age Group Championships

- This is a long course meet, held over at least five days
- Everyone swims according to their age at 31 December across a range of age groups.
- Athletes must be aged 11 or over at the end of the competition year and there are heats and finals for the majority of events

Open Championships

- This is a long course meet held over four days normally near the end of June.
- Scottish National Open Championships has no age group criteria, the fastest swimmer is the champion whatever their age.

Short Course Championships

- This is a short course meet held over three days in early December.
- As with the Open Championships, there are no age groups.

Summer Championships

These are British Swimming initiatives for which entries are decided by rankings and by invitation only.

Athletes can qualify for these events by swimming in long course meets during a short window (roughly between mid-March and the end of May).

At the end of the window, Athletes are ranked, and the top 24 in Great Britain (fewer in longer distance events) are invited to compete at the British Summer Championships.

The next ranked Athletes are invited to compete in their respective home country Summer Meets – for Scotland the **Scottish Summer Meet**.

TEAM COMPETITIONS

Team competitions are for clubs to swim against each other as a team where the result of an individual in a race is less important than the overall result of the team. These are probably the most exciting competitions and there are often lots of relays.

Duel Meets

These are usually one session long between two clubs offering a range of different events including relays.

It is a team event rather than the focus being on individual Athletes. May be licensed at level 2 or level 3.

Leagues

A league is a series of short meets between a group of clubs or teams. May be licensed at level 2 or level 3.

These may take the form of a number of duel meets or between all of the clubs if the number is small.

JUNIOR ACADEMY: The entry level of the Scottish Squad Structure for Athletes aged 11-14. This is the first level of the national squad pathway. Qualification is by achieving times at accredited meets.



POOLSIDE ETIQUETTE

WHAT TO BRING TO A GALA

You should ensure that your swimmer has their racing suit/trunks, goggles, caps and spares of all of these in case anything rips or breaks or goes missing! (poolsides are very busy and Athletes may get their kit mixed up with others) Pack their towel, a pair of flip-flops and some warm clothes for poolside, even though it is warm they will be in and out of the water often and can sometimes feel cold. Clubs will often have team kit that the Athletes are expected to wear at competitions.

CHANGING AREAS

Athletes can access changing areas for changing and should use the lockers provided to put away any belongings that they don't want with them on poolside during the day.

Changing areas are zero tolerance zones for mobile phone use and Athletes must **NOT** have their phones in use whilst in the changing area.

Changing areas due to the nature of these are off limits to Parents. Athletes should be self-sufficient in using these and getting changed pre and post event.

CLUB SEATING

Athletes will sit in allocated areas for teams and the Club coach will direct you to the area on the day of the competition.

Parents are.

HOW TO BEHAVE WHEN THE WHISTLES BLOW

The referee whistles are blown to alert everyone as well as the swimmers that there will be a race getting ready to commence.

There will be a series of short whistles blown which is to inform the swimmer behind the blocks that they should be ready and in position to start their race. One long whistle will be then heard, which is an invitation to the swimmers to mount the starting block and get themselves into position for the commencement of the race.

During the time when the whistles have been blown all in the pool area (including the spectating area) require to be quiet for the start. This is to allow the swimmers ready to race the ability to concentrate on their start.

During this time swimmers in the surrounding area, whilst it is good to support your teammates verbally, should be quiet also. Swimmers who have just raced and are moving back to their club seating should stand still at the beginning of the whistles until the start signal has been sounded.



All of these should be done to ensure that all swimmers are given the same level of respect. 'treat others as you would wish to be treated'.

SPECTATING

Parents should sit in the spectating gallery and cannot access poolside or into any changing/ team area due to Safeguarding procedures and legislation.

There will normally be an admission fee for spectating. This can be anything from £1.00 upwards and depends on the meet.

For some meets there will be a charge per session attended.

The gallery will be cleared at the end of a session. This will be for the staff to clear up the areas before allowing access again.

On occasions you will find that due to the number of swimmers attending or the nature of the facility that spectating space will be limited.

Front of House volunteers have in the past been verbally abused by people and this is unacceptable. They are performing a role to help their club and all the swimmers.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The meet organisers are well aware of the wide range of devices including mobile telephones which have photographic and filming capabilities. This enables the capture of both static and moving images. It should be acknowledged that the majority of images taken within Scottish Swimming licensed meets are appropriate and taken in good faith.

However, images of children and adults can be misused, and sharing images widely without consent may betray a confidence or identity of a child or adult, which could present a risk of harm to that individual if common sense procedures are not followed.

Spectators/ Coaches who wish to take images are requested to focus on their own family member as much as reasonably possible and to avoid including other participants in images, particularly if those images are being shared with family and friends or through social media platforms.

WARM UPS

Warm ups are often split into smaller groups of gender / age groups or club in order to manage the number of Athletes safely in the water at any one time.

The Club coach will let the Athletes know which warm up they are in when they arrive on the deck on the day of competition.



When entering the water at the beginning of the warm up, Athletes must not dive and must enter the water over the top of the starting blocks, jumping into the water feet first. This is to avoid any accidents and to protect the timing pads which are expensive and sensitive.

Athletes must exit the water via the sides and must not climb over the ends of the pool. The warm up will consist of some time spent doing general swimming before some lanes will be set aside for dive practice toward the end of the warm up. Athletes will be under the control of the Club Coaches allocated to poolside.

FOR COACHES

How to withdraw

Often Clubs are advised in advance that they can withdraw Athletes via an electronic form which is circulated. This allows meet management to promote any reserves in advance.

Any other withdrawals should be made on the day, as soon as possible, using a withdrawal form which will be given to your Club upon arrival at the meet.

It is imperative that all withdrawals are notified as it allows the reserves to be promoted and for the meet to run smoothly and efficiently.

If a swimmer turns up that is not expected - Not automatic that they will be added but the coach should ask the Meet Management if there is a possibility of entry.

If a swimmer is withdrawn due to being late – not automatic that they can be re-instated as reserves will have potentially been allocated their space. The Coach will ask the Meet Management if there is a possibility of being re-instated for all or some of their swims.

Start lists – 1 per club will be given out if paper copies are being used. Additional start lists maybe handed out after everyone has been given and the Technical Officials have their allocation. (this, however, not always the case) start lists may also not be paper copies but sent out on a broadcast.

Queries on times -If a Coach has a query on a time or a disqualification, they are able to ask the meet referee for clarification.

They should approach the referee who will usually be at the start end of the pool and wait for them to finish what they are doing before the query is made.

Please allow time for the referee to then make the necessary checks / explanations as the meet still requires to run during this time.

How early should you arrive? - Information circulated in advance will tell you what time you are allowed access to the poolside, this is usually set by the centre management so please respect this time and do not try to again access to poolside any earlier than stated.



Warmups – split - A lot of time and thought goes into the warm up split, including numbers in the water and how long each warm up can go for. If you have any queries or concerns about the warmup that has been allocated to the club, please ask the meet management as they will help out/ accommodate where possible.

Seating - Club Coaches/ Parents should be aware that many teams and Athletes need to share the same poolside and that at some very busy meets, not every swimmer will get a chair but as swimmer movements are very fluid during the sessions not all seats will be used at any one time.

Coaches and team managers are encouraged to be flexible and sensible when it comes to taking an allocation on poolside.

At some meets, allocation areas may be set in advance to ensure that the space available is best utilised.

VOLUNTEERING

Competitions don't just 'happen' they take planning and help before and during the day.

Volunteering is a vital part of club life and your swimmer's life at training and competitions and even out with the poolside environment.

As we all know lots of little jobs taken on make things easy and simple to achieve an outcome.

Without volunteers events within Squads, Clubs and Competition just will not happen and it should not be left to others. The majority of volunteers have full time jobs and a family like anyone else. Many volunteers at present have not had an athlete compete for many years and yet still come along to ensure fairness and athletes get the level of meet they deserve.

Please consider a volunteer role within your Club. None of the roles are onerous, 'many hands make light work'.



GLOSSARY

Accredited Time:	A time swum in a Level 1 or Level 2 meet where the conditions of the licence have been met. Times can then be seen on Rankings under the swimmer's name.
Entry Fee:	Every entry to Competition come at a cost per swim. These vary from meet to meet but without an entry fee payment Athletes cannot be accepted into the competition. Clubs will ask for availability of your swimmer to allow them to make entries and payments.
Administration Fee:	Clubs may charge an administration fee to help cover the costs of entering a meet. These may be for financial management or to cover coach or team manager attendance.
Converted Time:	Athletes will generally swim slower in a 50m pool than in a 25m pool because there are fewer turns. Factors can be used to adjust a time that makes it more realistic.
District:	One of the four regions of Scotland for swimming – East, Midland, North and West.
Entry Deadline:	Clubs set their own entry deadlines that are earlier than the entry deadline on the meet information. This is to allow them to process the entries and make payment. If you miss the entry deadline, you should not expect your swimmer to be entered. You are too late.
Short Course:	Held in a pool that is 25m long.
Long Course:	Held in a pool that is 50m long.
Opt In/opt Out:	Some clubs may offer Athletes the chance to enter by opting into all the swims at a meet, the coaches' selections or the swimmer's choice. Other clubs will enter a meet and it is up to the swimmer to opt out. If they don't opt out, they will be expected to attend and/or pay the entry fees regardless of whether they swim.
Oversubscribed:	When too many Athletes have entered a meet and not everyone can get the chance to swim a meet is described as oversubscribed. Athletes who are shown as scratched or rejected should get a refund.
Reserve:	A swimmer is described as a reserve or an alternate if there are too many Athletes entered into an event. If a swimmer who has been allocated a space in an event decides not to swim, then the reserve is allocated a space.



Disqualification:	Disqualifications are when a swimmer has not carried out the stroke in accordance with the rules. This, whilst upsetting for the swimmer should be taken as a teaching point to allow for work to be carried out to ensure it doesn't happen again. Sometimes the swimmer needs to hear the problem from someone else that is not their coach to take this onboard.
Technical Infraction:	This is the error that the swimmer has been disqualified for (e.g.: not touched the wall with two hands on a breaststroke or butterfly swim)
Withdrawal:	If a swimmer withdraws from a meet or an event that means they decide not to swim. Athletes who withdraw from events should expect to pay for their swims even if they have a good reason for it because their club will still have to pay for them.
Relays:	Relays are an exciting part of a competition. These are team events with 4 Athletes participating. These have Athletes coming into the wall and the next swimmer leaving the blocks in very quick succession.
Poolside Snacks	<p>These should be healthy snacks / lunch to get your swimmer through the day. Where possible these should be nut free, and easy to digest, some simple ideas include bananas, honey sandwiches, pasta, muesli bars etc.</p> <p>Remember to also pack a drink bottle -water is ideal – the poolside is warm, and Athletes will get dehydrated.</p>
Health and safety:	At the beginning of each warmup and session the Announcer will do a health and safety announcement as a reminder to all what is expected of them during their time on the poolside and in the spectating galleries.
Meet Mobile:	This is a downloadable app which you will find the time that the swimmer has posted in the race. Dependent on the Wi-Fi available within the facility the competition is being run times will be uploaded onto the app within a couple of minutes of the race finishing.